



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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SIX INDICTED IN SHAM MARRIAGE SCHEME

SEATTLE – Six people were charged today for their role in an elaborate conspiracy to illegally bring dozens of foreign nationals into the United States by arranging sham marriages.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents arrested four of the accused conspirators today at locations in Seattle and Vancouver, Washington. Those taken into custody were: Phuoc Huu Nguyen (a.k.a. Steve Nguyen), 42, Monica Nguyen (a.k.a. Dao Thi Nguyen), 30, Everett Ledbetter, 34, and Amanda Thao Nguyen, 28. Warrants have also been issued for Loc Huu Nguyen, 38, and Richard Earl Anderson, 35, but investigators believe they are currently out of the county.

According to the indictment, the suspects recruited U.S. citizens to travel to Vietnam to enter into fake marital engagements with Vietnamese nationals. As part of the scheme, the Vietnamese nationals paid \$20,000 to \$30,000 for non-immigrant visas authorizing their entry into the U.S. The U.S. citizen recruits, who received up to \$1500 in addition to travel expenses, wrote fake “love letters” and staged photos with the Vietnamese nationals to make the relationships appear real. Some of the U.S. citizen recruits who tried to back out after traveling to Vietnam were threatened by members of the ring.

“The greed of those behind this scheme led to the exploitation of hundreds of people and compromised the integrity of our legal immigration system,” said Leigh Winchell, ICE special agent-in-charge for investigations in Seattle. “ICE is determined to target not only the criminal organizations behind these schemes, but anyone who profits from them.”

ICE and the U.S. State Department are in the process of contacting as many as 100 U.S. citizens who may face fraud charges for their role in the scheme. The 130 Vietnamese nationals who illegally entered the U.S. will be processed for removal. In addition to the conspiracy charge, the government is seeking forfeiture of the ring’s assets – including cash and property.

Agents from the U.S. State Department and the Washington State Gambling Commission aided ICE in the investigation.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.